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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 06 ANKARA 007319

SIPDIS

FOR VCJCS GEN PACE

E.O. 12958: DECL: EXEMPT: 1.6 X5, X6

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [OVIP](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANOTHER STEP TOWARD A "SOFT LANDING": VCJCS GEN  
PACE'S DECEMBER 2-7 VISIT

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch, reasons 1.5b/d.

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Summary  
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1. (C) You arrive in Turkey at a time when our focus is on increasing Turkish cooperation on Iraq reconstruction and minimizing the fallout from the decision to forego Turkey's offer to contribute forces to the stabilization efforts in Iraq. The Turkish General Staff (TGS) saw deploying forces to Iraq as a tangible way to strengthen our mil-mil relationship, and many military officers were disappointed by the decision to not send forces. The Nov 17-20 visit to the US by DCHOD Gen Basbug was part of our effort to achieve the "soft landing" we seek; your visit, by emphasizing close and continuing mil-mil cooperation, is another step toward that objective. Iraq and resolution of the PKK/KADEK question remain the focus of the US-Turkish relationship which nonetheless is much broader. After Basbug's Washington visit, expectations are high that you will be addressing concrete plans vis-a-vis KADEK with TGS. The GOT is looking at trade, humanitarian assistance and commercial opportunities for Turkish businesses as part of an Iraqi policy aimed at helping achieve stability in a unified Iraq. The governing Justice and Development (Turkish acronym: AK) Party, which came to power with an overwhelming Parliamentary majority, remains highly popular in the heartland, with polls showing the party five to ten points ahead of the 34.5% vote it got in November 2002 general elections. The TGS remains suspicious of AK's Islamic roots. The government has pursued a comprehensive reform program geared toward gaining EU accession and continues to assert that it wants close ties to the U.S. It tells us it is committed to finding a solution for Cyprus and is open to improving relations with Armenia, but we have yet to see significant concrete steps in either area. Despite its policy of good neighborliness, Turkey has supported USG policy objectives in Syria and Iran. Two years of sound fiscal/monetary policy and structural reforms, the rapid and successful conclusion of the Iraq war, expected U.S. financial assistance, and unprecedented IMF support have combined to bring down inflation and interest rates, restore modest growth, and create some hope that Turkey can work its way out from under an incredibly high public debt burden. End summary.

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Global War on Terror  
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2. (S) Turkey has a vested interest in rooting out terrorism given its long-standing campaign against the PKK/KADEK and the leftist DHKP-C. The recent bombings in Istanbul will certainly strengthen Turkish anti-terrorism resolve. As a new front in the global war on terrorism, the Turkish security services are having to adapt to countering al Qaida-type threats in a new way. International cooperation in these investigations is improving, although slow and incomplete. It will take some time before the Turks fully understand the dimensions of the threat they face and how best to deal with it. Some of the issues get caught up in domestic politics and bureaucratic rivalries. Turkey has lent substantial support to the Global War on Terror. Shortly after September 11, 2001 Turkey responded to the NATO Article 5 invocation by offering blanket overflight and landing clearance for transport aircraft, and blanket overflight clearance in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. After the Taliban had been removed from power, Turkey provided troops to the International Stabilization Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) and commanded ISAF II from Jun 02 to Feb 03. We are now seeking additional Turkish support again. Ankara has also been a proactive partner in intelligence gathering and information sharing, and through its diplomatic efforts with Middle Eastern governments.

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13. (S) In Iraq, Turkey's support to the U.S., despite its disappointing position at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, is making a positive contribution to our efforts there. The March 1 denial of the use of Turkish territory for an OIF northern front strained the American-Turkish relationship. The July 4 arrest and interrogation of 11 Turkish special forces personnel in northern Iraq put further strain on the relationship. A subsequent parliamentary vote on Oct 7 that, despite significant public opposition and before the passage of UN Security Council resolution 1511, authorized a Turkish troop contribution to the stabilization force effort was seen by many as an attempt to make up for the Mar 1 vote. The USG has publicly thanked the GOT for this offer. Additionally, despite disappointment that Turkish troops would not be part of the stabilization force in the near term, TGS DCHOD Gen Basbug reiterated their interest in providing training (police, border guard, etc. to the Iraqi government during his Nov 17-20, 2003 visit to the United States. We understand CPA has agreed to accept Turkish police trainers in Iraq, but the details need to be worked out.

14. (U) There has been a concerted effort on the part of the GOT to shift its Iraq policy away from one centered on ethnicity (Turkmen and Kurd) and northern Iraq towards a more central, Baghdad-oriented policy based primarily on contributing to stability through trade, humanitarian assistance and commercial opportunities for Turkish businesses. However, GOT efforts have not found much traction with the military, the press or the public, which remain focused on the north. The Turks have taken a number of concrete steps in humanitarian assistance and reconstruction since Secretary Powell's April visit to Turkey. The World Food Program (WFP) shipped considerable quantities of food through Turkey, and Turkey was the world's biggest supplier (in value terms) to WFP. The GOT also has supported the U.S. military's efforts to establish a ground line of communications (GLOC) here to re-supply U.S. forces in Iraq (value over \$350M to date).

15. (S) USEUCOM currently uses Habur Gate as the only entry/exit point for all logistical sustainment moving through Turkey to northern Iraq. This support includes diesel, JP8, benzene, LPG, bottled water, fresh fruits and vegetables, construction material, humanitarian support, AAFES, and DLA items. Approximately 1,400 trucks cross in each direction daily (total of 2,800 trucks clearing the gate). Current backlog of trucks heading east into Iraq from Turkey is 3km (about a 23-hour delay). We are concerned that we will not be able to get enough traffic through the gate as fuel needs ramp up for winter. The backlog of trucks heading west from Iraq into Turkey is about two days, with 1,500 in the holding area and another 4km waiting on the road. The GOT wants to renovate Habur Gate soon and, in order to ease operations there, has proposed a second crossing 10 km west of Habur. Turkish closure/reduced manning of Habur operations for up to 5 hours per day contributes to significant inefficiencies at the crossing. We have pushed the Turks to operate Habur 24/7. IGC President Talabani agreed Nov 19 to open discussions with the Turks in January on additional border crossings, but we need to press for operational efficiency within the context of these talks.

16. (S) PKK/KADEK: The Turks remain very focused on the presence of PKK/KADEK terrorists in northern Iraq, and this is perhaps the most significant issue on the plate of the Turkish military at present. State Counter Terrorism Chief Cofer Black's meetings with Turkish officials on Oct. 2 established agreement to work on a plan of action to eliminate the PKK/KADEK threat to Turkey from northern Iraq. A Turkish Reintegration Law, allowing non-leadership members of the PKK/KADEK to return voluntarily to Turkey expires Feb 6, 2004. Owing to the restrictive nature of the law and efforts by PKK/KADEK to misinform its own members about the law, results have been disappointing so far. The Turks are looking to the USG to make good on our commitment to eliminate the PKK/KADEK threat from Iraq. CJTF 7 has concluded that the best strategy to pursue versus the PKK/KADEK is one of &progressive engagement8 which will likely be much slower than the GOT desires. The Turks also remain disturbed by what they consider to be Kurdish (vice U.S. or Iraqi central authority) control of the Iraqi side of the Turkish-Iraq border and a perceived U.S. favoritism of Kurds. There are very real Turkish sensitivities on the PKK/KADEK, its activities in Iraq (including the recent congress), and the threat that resurgent Kurdish nationalism (wherever it manifests itself) as serious threats to Turkey's security and national integrity.

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## CYPRUS

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17. (SBU) Prime Minister Erdogan has reaffirmed his intention to use the Annan III Plan as the basis for finding a solution on Cyprus, both for domestic political reasons and his interest in promoting Turkey's EU candidacy. However, Denktash, who the Turkish military has long supported, has rejected the Annan plan, and he and his supporters in Ankara retard progress towards a comprehensive solution. Basbug was extremely negative about prospects for a Cyprus settlement in his discussions with Deputy Secretary Armitage. His view seemed to correspond with Denktash's position. Much will depend on the government's willingness to take on this issue between now and spring 2004, when Cyprus' EU membership becomes effective.

## CAUCASUS

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18. (C) The GOT continues to express concern to us that the U.S. has no strategic plan for dealing with Russian and Iranian pressure in the region. It has hinted that Turkey would be forced to make its own peace with Russian and Iranian interests absent any coherent U.S. political strategy beyond completion of Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan pipeline and standard expressions of support for democracy and resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkish concern about the region has heightened with recent developments in Georgia. Turkey can have a positive impact on the transition in Georgia by supporting a peaceful process leading to free elections and national unity. Both TGS and EUCOM have worked hard to develop a professional, NATO-compatible brigade in Georgia. These and other US and Turkish efforts may at least partially explain why the military chose not to intervene in the current crisis. The Nov 17 meeting of the bilateral Caucasus Working Group (CWG) reaffirmed the commitment of both Turkey and the US to work with Georgia,s and Azerbaijan,s militaries in joint and complementary projects to further promote Western values, professionalism and regional stability.

19. (C) The establishment of de facto relations with Armenia proceeds step by step; Ankara has allowed a second charter airline to start twice-weekly scheduled Istanbul-Yerevan service. However, continued GOT linkage of normalization of relations with Armenia to improvements in Nagorno-Karabakh has thwarted an official breakthrough. The GOT also maintains that it cannot establish normal relations until Armenia recognizes its border with Turkey. GOT and AK party officials tell us they recognize the potential trade and development benefits to Turkey from opening the border. However, passage of any Armenian genocide language, even by only one chamber of Congress, will set progress back significantly. The genocide issue is a very sensitive subject within the Turkish military.

## MIDDLE EAST ROADMAP

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110. (SBU) Turkey prides itself on its good relations with both Israelis and Palestinians. While Turkey supports the U.S.-sponsored Road Map and has close military, intel, and commercial ties with Israel, the GOT is leery of getting too far ahead of a Turkish populace that sympathizes with the plight of the Palestinians. Erdogan and FonMin Gul have deferred a visit until they can figure out how to finesse the expectations of the Turkish public that such a visit would include a call on Arafat. A proposed visit to Ankara by Israeli PM Sharon was also recently shelved due to TU PM Erdogan,s purportedly busy schedule. However, the mid-Oct 03 visit to Israel by TUAf Chief General Ibrahim Firtina, and participation by Israel in Nov 03 Anatolian Eagle air exercise, reaffirm the close ties between the two militaries.

## SYRIA AND IRAN

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111. (C) Both the GOT and core elements of the State argue that Turkey: 1) lives in a rough neighborhood and has an interest in minimizing friction with its neighbors; and 2) shares the same values and goals in the Middle East as the U.S. (stability, democracy and prosperity). In the latter regard, the GOT has asserted that Turkey is constantly delivering a message to the Syrians to cooperate more with the U.S. and sees Syria as engaged in gradual democratization, a process the GOT thinks needs

encouragement. Turkey and Syria appear to be increasing confidence building measures, with the GOT announcing that it will de-mine its border strip with Syria to increase trade and human contact as well as increase cultivable land for the impoverished southeast. The GOT has no enthusiasm for a policy of pressure against Syria. There is no military-to-military relationship between Syria and Turkey.

12. (C) Relations with Iran bear the weight of centuries of mutual suspicion, indeed antipathy, but the current GOT appears intent on maintaining open dialogue with Tehran. The GOT shares U.S. concerns about reported Iranian WMD programs and has expressed support for the U.S. initiative to bring Iran into conformity with IAEA safeguards. However, officials also assert that too much pressure (e.g. referring a finding of NPT non-compliance to the UNSC) would undermine moderates in Tehran and strengthen the position of Iranian hard-liners, who believe that the West will not be appeased and therefore should not be accommodated. Turkish officials argue that Turkey has an interest in minimizing friction with its neighbor. Intent on maintaining at least cordial relations and loathe to upset economic ties, despite Tehran's past record of support and safe harbor to PKK terrorists, officials have continually cautioned U.S. interlocutors that Iran is not easily changed from outside; that the Azeris are well entrenched in Iranian society, with considerable economic and political influence; and that attempts to effect regime change from abroad are doomed to failure.

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EU ACCESSION  
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13. (C) The issue of EU accession is one of high importance for Turkey, and one of the very few virtually all Turks can agree on. The Turkish Parliament has adopted seven EU-related human rights reform packages over the past two years. The legal amendments are designed to crack down on torture, loosen restrictions on speech and assembly, reduce the political influence of the National Security Council, and expand religious freedom. The EU and other outside observers have praised the reforms, while criticizing the slow pace of implementation; the EU's latest progress report on Turkey highlights the need for implementation. Questions remain whether the AK government will be able to implement these reforms rapidly, particularly given the resistance from an openly partisan President Sezer and those in the judiciary, military and other areas of the state apparatus who are content with the status quo and suspicious of AK, the EU and the U.S. Nationalistic and status quo elements of the military, police, judiciary, and bureaucracy have criticized some of the reforms as threats to national security, and have resisted implementation. Despite GOT progress on human rights, EU officials have repeatedly told the GOT that it will be difficult for the EU at the December 2004 Summit to offer Turkey a date to begin accession talks if there is no settlement on Cyprus.

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DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE  
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14. (C) The governing AK Party, which came to power with an overwhelming Parliamentary majority in November 2002, continues to pursue democratic and political reform. Meanwhile, AK's principle challengers -- the opposition CHP and xenophobic Genc Party -- have lost momentum. AK insists its substantial and path-breaking democratic reform packages demonstrate it is wedded to democracy and strong relations with the EU and U.S. However, many in the Turkish establishment question AK's sincerity and express suspicion about AK's agenda, concerned that the party intends to change the role of religion in Turkey. Turkey's generals are keen to protect their status as Guardians of the (Kemalist) Republic and the version of "secularism" that has prevailed in Turkey since the mid-1920s. They, and much of the status quo forces in the State, assert AK is a challenge to the founding ideology of Ataturk's Turkey; AK in turn says that its "secular" opponents have hijacked Ataturk's intentions and are responsible for the stagnation in Turkey's political, economic, and social development.

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THE ECONOMY  
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15. (SBU) Two years of sound fiscal/monetary policy and structural reforms, the rapid and successful conclusion of the Iraq war, expected U.S. financial assistance, and

unprecedented IMF support have combined to bring down inflation and interest rates, restore modest growth, and create some hope that Turkey can work its way out from under a high public debt burden. The GOT is attempting to build on this momentum and thus push the economy away from the financial precipice on which it has been perched for the past three years. This will require the government, which at first implemented the IMF recovery program with muted enthusiasm, to obtain quarterly IMF reviews on time, proceed with scheduled privatizations, keep moving forward on EU pre-accession requirements, and improve the environment for foreign direct investment. Failure to take advantage of this opportunity will not necessarily mean another crisis, but will leave the economy extremely vulnerable to external or internal shocks and undermine the potential for prosperity. In late September, the U.S. and Turkey signed an agreement under which the USG will provide \$8.5 billion on low-interest loans to support Turkey's economic reform efforts. Money under the agreement could begin flowing once the GOT cabinet and President have approved the package, however the agreement has become politically controversial.

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HLDG  
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¶16. (SBU) The US hosted a High-Level Defense Group in Williamsburg, VA from Nov 17-19, 2003. Deputy TGS Chief Basbug led the Turkish delegation; Ms. Mira Ricardel (Overseeing Assistant Secretary of Defense-International Security Policy) led the US delegation. Discussions focused on a number of key political-military and security cooperation issues vital to the US-TU relationship, including GWOT, cooperation in Iraq, Defense Industrial cooperation, and Turkish modernization projects such as Joint Strike Fighter, Turkish AEW&C PEACE EAGLE, SPEWS II electronic suite for their Block 50 F-16s, and the US-TU Space Cooperation MOU. Working groups related to the HLDG addressed, inter alia, continued efforts to identify areas of potential cooperation in Iraq reconstruction and training opportunities (police, border guard, etc), the importance of Caucasus region and Caucasus Working Group initiatives, and the continuing efforts to develop Space Cooperation (working on MOU) as a new dimension to the relationship. Basbug, who professed that TGS wanted to focus on the future and not the past, was very pleased with the outcome of his visit, noting in particular that he appreciated the US response with regard to combating PKK terrorism in northern Iraq that he received during his meetings in Washington, including with you. In this regard we expect that the PKK issue will be a topic of high interest during your visit.

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Missile Defense  
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¶17. (C) The Missile Defense Technical Experts Group (TGS and MDA) last met in May in Colorado Springs. At that meeting Phase III of the joint architectural study was approved and new areas of research and cooperation were discussed, such as a sensor study, post attack damage scenarios, and the NATO study. MFA tells us the GOT is eager to hear how the US plans to coordinate its own missile defense, its efforts to have other countries buy in to a joint system, and the NATO study. Because of the high cost of a missile defense system, Turkey is waiting to see how it can reap the benefits of a joint system before it commits to providing its own MD system. The TGS told us during the recent HLDG meeting that the option to buy used German Patriot missile systems is still being evaluated by the Turkish Air Force.

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NATO Istanbul Summit  
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¶18. (C) The GOT is determined to make the Summit a success. The dates have been confirmed for June 28-29, 2004. Turkey is waiting to hear what Washington has in mind for themes and is supportive of the US desire to use the Summit to expand NATO activity in the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia.

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Security Cooperation Issues  
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¶19. (C) Incirlik operations: US Air Force operations out of Incirlik Air Base have operated smoothly, generally without Turkish Air Force interference as was so often the case

during ONW. The recent surge in Tanker numbers was accommodated without incident. There is current discussion at AMC to raise optempo at Incirlik by bringing in C-17 aircraft and support personnel as part of a hub and spoke operation for sustainment of US forces in Iraq. This concept (still in initial US planning phase) has not yet been broached with the TGS, and may require Parliamentary approval. There is also a plan to use Incirlik for the swap of forces in Iraq. We expect TGS approval once we formally submit our request. The plan calls for moving 60K troops (up to 1000 troops per day) through Incirlik during the 90-day period from Jan to Mar 04 (this plan could be approved under an existing government decree). We are expecting State,s Under Secretary Grossman to visit in mid December to consult with Turkey about the base,s future as part of the European force posture exercise.

120. (U) Anatolian Eagle: The Anatolian Eagle exercise in Konya concluded Nov 13, 2003. This was very successful exercise that included participation by Israel, Germany, the US, and Turkey. USAFE was very pleased with the spirit of cooperation from the Turks, and is looking to use the agreement framework from this exercise as a springboard to resume Weapons Training Detachments and other bilateral exercises.

121. (U) Space Agreement: OSD C3I (Mr. Art Baer) and the Turkish Air Forces Command (TAFC) recently completed initial negotiations of a Space Agreement that will support the new Turkish Space Program, for which the TUAF is the executive agent. The Turks have committed to responding to the draft text of the agreement by early December. This was also a subject of discussion at the recent HLDG. The two sides recommitted themselves to the goal of signing the Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) umbrella/framework agreement for defense space cooperation at the American-Turkish Council annual meeting in March 2004. Also, the US agreed to approach NASA regarding Turkish interest in placing an astronaut in space, and to continue to identify and prioritize appropriate space-related training courses for the Turkish Air Force.

122. (U) SPEWS II: BAE and TAFC recently signed a direct commercial contract to upgrade the electronic warfare capability of Turkey,s Block 50 F-16s.

123. (U) Airsouth and the School in Izmir: It is likely that military leadership you meet with will ask about the possibility of bringing a DoDDS school back to Izmir coincident with the AIRSOUTH move. US position to date is that this remains a GOT responsibility. DoDDS has no interest in pursuing this based on fiscal constraints, but could possibly be approached to provide expertise in the establishment of an international school there. This issue remains key in the successful transition of AIRSOUTH.  
EDELMAN